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ABSTRACT

The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) began in English primary schools at the start of the autumn term, 1998. It was intended to bring about "a dramatic improvement in literacy standards," so that, by 2002, 80% of all 11 year olds should reach level 4 in English at the end of Key Stage 2 national curriculum tests. This is the third report on the NLS published by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). The NLS continues to have a major impact on the teaching of English in primary schools and on the content of initial teacher education courses. This has had a positive effect on the standards of pupils' reading, both of boys and girls. By contrast, the impact of the NLS on writing has been much more limited. The report lists other main findings; points for action; and standards of achievement and pupils' progress. It also discusses the quality of teaching of literacy; other issues such as the teaching of handwriting and the teaching of literacy to pupils with special educational needs; the impact of intervention strategies; leadership and management; and training and support. (PM)

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The National Literacy Strategy: The Second Year.

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THE NATIONAL LITERACY STRATEGY: the second year

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THE NATIONAL LITERACY STRATEGY: the second year

Introduction and evidence base

1 The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) began in English primary schools at the start of the autumn term, 1998. The purpose of the Strategy is to bring about "a dramatic improvement in literacy standards", so that, by 2002, 80 per cent of 11-year-olds should reach the standard expected for their age in English (i.e. Level 4) in the end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests.

2 Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) are inspecting the implementation and impact of the NLS in a nationally representative sample of 300 primary schools, observing the teaching of literacy and interviewing key personnel, such as the headteacher and the literacy co-ordinator. Most of these schools have been visited on at least three occasions since 1998 when the Strategy was introduced. HMI also inspect training courses and regularly meet NLS personnel such as literacy consultants, their line managers in local education authorities (LEAs), and the regional directors of the Strategy. Evidence from Section 10 inspections is also taken into account.

3 In addition to the inspections, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has established an annual testing programme to provide data on pupils' attainment and progress in English in Years 3, 4 and 5. These data, collected and analysed by the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER), augment those already available through the National Curriculum tests of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. An annex to this report, produced by the QCA, summarises the results of the English tests taken by the pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. A fuller version is available on the QCA website.[1]

4 This is the third report on the NLS published by The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). Towards the end of the first term of the implementation, HMI offered an early view, which included the important evidence that insufficient attention was being given to the teaching of phonics. At the end of the first year of the Strategy, HMI summarised evidence from visits to every school in the national sample and reported, amongst a range of issues, the need to give much more emphasis to the teaching of writing. This is, therefore, a principal theme of this report. The issues were also considered in a discussion paper by HMI.[2] Those developing the NLS have prepared a number of new training and support materials. However, it is not possible to evaluate the impact of these because they are only now working their way into the system.

Main findings

5 The NLS continues to have a major impact on the teaching of English in primary schools and on the content of initial teacher education courses. The teaching of reading in primary schools has undergone a transformation, particularly in the amount of effective whole-class work at both key stages. This has had a very positive effect on standards of pupils' reading, both of girls and boys.

6 By contrast, the impact of the NLS on writing has been much more limited. There remain four important concerns:

- *attainment in writing remains too low and lags far behind attainment in reading;*
- *whereas attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 improved this year by five percentage points, the results for writing improved by only one percentage point, from 54 per cent of pupils attaining Level 4 to 55 per cent;*

[1] http://www.qca.org.uk

[2] *The teaching of writing in primary schools.* A discussion paper by HMI. Available on www.ofsted.gov.uk

- *boys do less well than girls in all aspects of English at both key stages, particularly in writing;*
- *more than half of all boys transfer to secondary education having gained no more than Level 3 in writing.*

7 The proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 or above in English rose by four percentage points, from 71 to 75 per cent, in the 2000 end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests. Overall attainment at Level 4 or above in English has increased by ten percentage points in the two years of the Strategy. Progress towards the Government's target of 80 per cent at Level 4 in 2002 has been encouraging, therefore, but these results disguise an underlying weakness in standards of writing which remains a significant national issue.

8 There have been healthy increases over the past two years in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 in English. Twenty-eight per cent of pupils achieved Level 5 in 2000, and over one-third of girls now transfer to secondary education having attained this level.

9 The gap between the performance of boys and girls in English remains a cause for concern. The overall attainment of girls is now nine percentage points ahead of that of boys. The gap between boys and girls in reading narrowed to six percentage points this year, but remained at 15 percentage points in writing.

10 At Key Stage 1, improvements were limited in 2000 to one percentage point in reading, writing and spelling for those pupils attaining Level 2 or above. If the more demanding benchmark of Level 2B is applied, the proportion of pupils reaching this in reading increased by two percentage points, to 68 per cent, and in writing by three percentage points, to 56 per cent. These improvements are encouraging, but it is worrying that almost half of pupils transfer to Key Stage 2 having achieved no better than Level 2C in writing.

11 The gender gap in attainment is also considerable at Key Stage 1. It is particularly wide for writing: girls outperform boys in writing by nine percentage points at Level 2 and above, and by 15 percentage points if the benchmark of Level 2B and above is used. Although the gap has narrowed slightly from 1999 to 2000, it remains a cause for concern.

12 The results of the specially commissioned English tests taken by pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 in the sample schools also provide evidence of the progress made by pupils, showing improvements across all ability ranges in reading, writing and spelling. The pupils who are now in Years 4 and 5, and who can be tracked over the two years of the Strategy, made more progress in reading than might have been expected simply from the fact that they were a year older. The progress made by the Year 4 pupils in writing was disappointing in comparison, whereas the progress made by Year 5 pupils in writing was good.

13 Pupils' response to the literacy hour was satisfactory or better in nine in ten lessons. In the one in ten lessons where it was unsatisfactory, this reflected weaknesses in the quality of the teaching, often because pupils were not challenged or engaged sufficiently in the work.

14 The overall inspection grades for the quality of the teaching of writing changed little from the autumn 1999 visits to those in the subsequent two terms, although writing was being taught more often and was given more time each week. There was a small increase in the proportion of lessons with good guided writing but the proportion of lessons with good shared writing declined slightly. However, guided writing was weak in a quarter of lessons and shared writing in one in five. These are important findings.

15 There are still too many classes in which the teaching of phonics receives insufficient attention. The teaching of phonics is not always regular or systematic and the coverage of phonic knowledge at Key Stage 1 is often too slow. The teaching of word or sentence level work is unsatisfactory in one out of four lessons. The teaching of phonics in Years 3 and 4 has received greater attention through the Additional Literacy Support (ALS) initiative; this has helped to improve pupils' reading, but there is little evidence so far of its impact on writing.

16 Many teachers find it difficult to organise independent and group work in a way which provides worthwhile tasks for all pupils; there are particular weaknesses in this element of the literacy hour in one in six lessons. The plenary, taught effectively in only two in five lessons, continues to be the weakest part of the literacy hour.

17 Over the year, teachers sought ways to improve their teaching of writing. As a result, modifications emerged in the way in which literacy was taught. For example, teachers began to modify the literacy hour itself and, they began to provide additional time for the teaching of writing.

18 These two modifications to the literacy hour were particularly effective. First, when teaching writing, the more confident and successful teachers reversed the order in which they taught the first two elements of the hour. They taught the word level work first and the text level work second. This protected the important teaching of word level work, and it enabled the teacher to draw a direct link between text level work and the writing undertaken by the pupils in the independent and group work. The second modification involved the provision, when appropriate, of extra time for independent and group work in order for pupils to undertake more extended pieces of writing.

19 Other subjects, particularly science, history and geography, were increasingly providing the context for the additional teaching of writing. When the teaching of reading and writing, based on the objectives in the Framework, was incorporated into the work in other subjects, progress was made in both subjects.

20 The quality of the teaching for pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL) is generally at least satisfactory. Most schools with such pupils have implemented effectively the principle of the inclusion of all pupils within the literacy hour. This has been seen to best effect in the partnership teaching which has developed between staff employed through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) and classroom teachers.

21 The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support the teaching of literacy remains limited. Many schools recognise that ICT has the potential to contribute strongly to the teaching of literacy, and have identified it as an area for development, but few are clear how best to proceed.

22 Leadership and management of the implementation of the Strategy have improved and, by the end of the year, were at least satisfactory in almost nine in ten schools. Over the year there was a significant increase in the amount of monitoring by headteachers of the teaching of literacy.

23 The regional directors and literacy consultants continue to play a key role in the Strategy and are very effective. They have worked with great commitment and their contributions have been appreciated in the schools and LEAs in which they work. Occasionally, consultants have been

reluctant to challenge poor practice and, where difficult situations arise in schools, they have not always had sufficient support from their LEAs.

Points for action

24 In order to sustain the improvements achieved so far and to make further progress on standards, those with national responsibility for the management of the Strategy should:

- *concentrate the programmes of training and support for schools on the teaching of writing;*
- *ensure that the training includes guidance on how the literacy hour may be modified to support further the teaching of writing, and how time outside of the hour may best be used for teaching writing;*
- *provide guidance on how ICT can contribute to the teaching of literacy.*

25 Those with responsibility for the Strategy at LEA level should:

- *ensure that literacy has a clear focus in the Education Development Plan, indicating how the LEA intends to raise standards of literacy;*
- *ensure good use of statistical data and inspection evidence, as the basis for intervention and the setting of challenging targets;*
- *provide effective support for schools where the leadership and management of the Strategy are weakest;*
- *ensure everything possible is done to improve the teaching of writing, through disseminating good practice and tackling weaknesses;*
- *ensure literacy consultants receive the support they need in difficult situations.*

26 To build on the progress made so far, schools should:

- *ensure that sufficient attention is given to the teaching of writing and that teachers are helped to improve their knowledge of grammar in order to teach writing more effectively;*
- *provide high quality, direct teaching of writing;*
- *ensure an appropriate emphasis on word level work, particularly by teaching phonics systematically in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4;*
- *monitor closely the progress of boys, and review the appropriateness of teaching methods and resources for them;*
- *enable pupils to apply and develop their literacy skills in their work in other subjects.*

STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND PUPILS' PROGRESS

27 Attainment in English has continued to improve, but at a slower rate than last year. Two important concerns remain: first, attainment in writing remains too low and lags far behind attainment in reading; and, second, boys do less well than girls at both key stages.

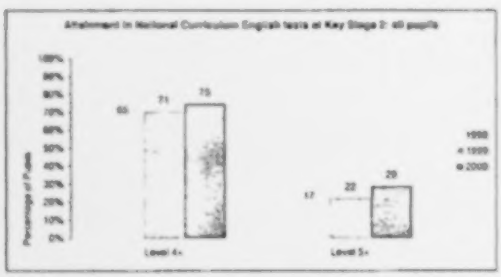
28 The proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 or above in English at the end of Key Stage 2 rose by four percentage points, from 71 to 75 per cent, in the National Curriculum Year 6 tests taken in the summer of 2000. This represents another significant step towards the Government's target of 80 per cent in 2002. Overall attainment at Level 4 or above in English has increased by ten percentage points in the two years of the Strategy.

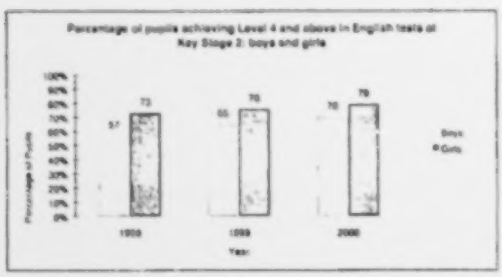
29 There have also been significant increases over the past two years in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 in English. Twenty eight per cent of pupils achieved Level 5 in 2000, and over one-third of girls now transfer to secondary education having attained this higher level.

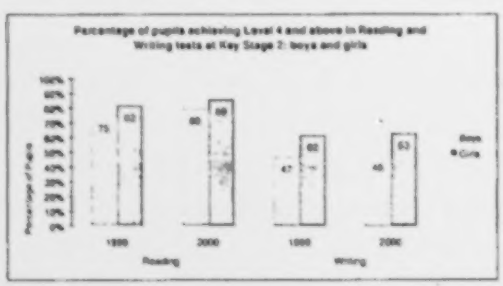
30 The greatest improvements at Level 4 and above have been in reading, in which attainment rose by five percentage points in 2000. However, the results for writing show an increase of only one percentage point in 2000, from 54 to 55 per cent.

31 In addition, a considerable gender gap remains. The overall attainment of girls in English is nine percentage points ahead of that of boys at the end of Key Stage 2. The gap between the attainment of boys and girls narrowed to six percentage points in reading in 2000, but remained at 15 percentage points in writing. This is despite an increased focus on the teaching of writing during 1999/2000 and the intervention strategies put in place for Key Stage 2 pupils, such as 'booster' classes. Further gains overall are likely to become progressively more difficult to achieve without substantial improvement in writing, particularly that of boys.

32 The charts below illustrate the progress made in English at Key Stage 2 over the past three years.







33 At **Key Stage 1**, improvements were limited in 2000 to one percentage point in reading, writing and spelling for those pupils attaining Level 2 or above. However, Level 2 covers a broad range of attainment and, using the 2B benchmark, in 2000 there

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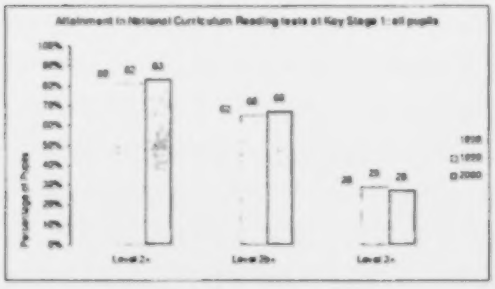
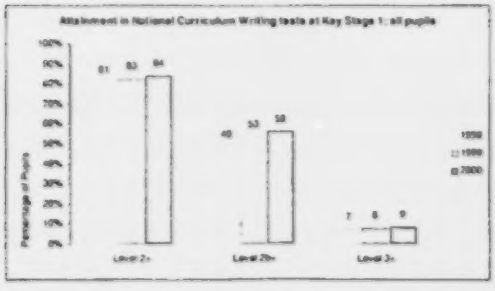
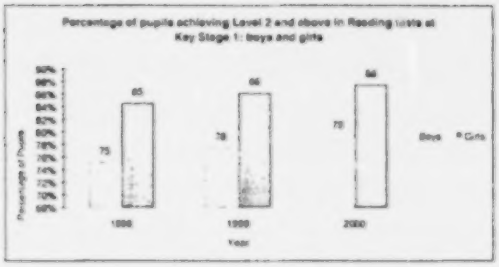
was an improvement in reading of two percentage points to 68 per cent, and in writing of three percentage points to 56 per cent. From 1998 to 2000 the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2B or above in writing has risen by eight percentage points. Nevertheless, almost one-third of pupils transfer to Key Stage 2 with reading skills below Level 2B; in writing, more than four in ten pupils transfer with attainment below Level 2B. At Key Stage 2 there has been a significant rise in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5, but at Key Stage 1 there has been very little change in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 in reading or writing.

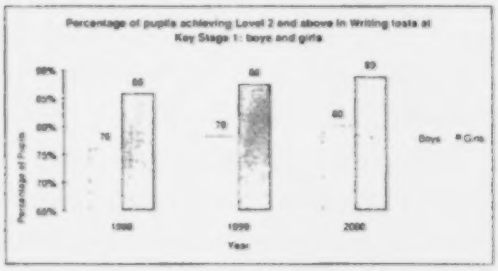
34 The gender gap in attainment is also evident and significant at Key Stage 1. It is particularly wide for writing: girls outperform boys in writing by nine percentage points at Level 2 and above, and by 15 percentage points and above Level 2B. Although the gap has narrowed slightly between 1999 and 2000, it remains a cause for concern.

35 The following charts illustrate the progress made in English at Key Stage 1 over the past three years.









36 The analysis by NFER of the specially commissioned tests for the schools in the national sample shows improvements across all ability ranges in reading, writing and spelling. In Years 3, 4 and 5 there has been a slight reduction in the numbers of pupils failing to reach the lowest level measured by the tests (except for writing in Year 4). By Year 5, 46 per cent of pupils had already reached Level 4 in reading, an increase of three percentage points on the Year 5 results in the previous year. This reflects the continuing improvements in reading standards shown in the national test results. Over 90 per cent of the pupils who achieved Level 3 in the Year 5 reading test in 1999 achieved Level 4 or better in this year's national tests, although for writing the equivalent figure was only 75 per cent.

37 It has been possible to track pupils in the sample schools as they move through Key Stage 2, since the NFER tests measure the progress of the same pupils from year to year. The table on the following page summarises the results of the reading and writing tests in 1999 and 2000. The figures for reading are mean standardised scores. Those for writing are mean equivalent

points scores based on the National Curriculum levels of attainment, for which the expected rate of progress would be equivalent to one whole point per term.

	1999 Year 3 cohort	
	1999 (Y3)	2000(Y4)
Reading	96.0	99.2
Writing	14.43	14.98

	1999 Year 4 cohort	
	1999 (Y4)	2000(Y5)
Reading	98.5	100.1
Writing	15.22	19.00

It is clear that the 1999 Year 3 cohort made much more progress during Year 4 in reading than in writing, the results of which are disappointing. The progress of the Year 4 cohort is, however, much more encouraging for writing: these pupils made good progress in Year 5 in their writing, achieving gains of more than one point per term.

THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHING OF LITERACY

Introduction

38 In response to concerns about the relatively low standards of writing, HMI focused their visits in the spring and summer terms of the second year of the Strategy on the teaching of writing. This report reflects that focus. HMI observed literacy hours where writing was taught, scrutinised samples of pupils' writing from selected year groups, held discussions with headteachers about the attainment of boys and observed lessons in subjects other than English where pupils were writing. Discussions with headteachers and literacy co-ordinators provided information about the extent to which literacy – and writing in particular – was being taught outside the literacy hour. HMI observed modifications to the literacy hour, as teachers gained confidence in the second year of implementation.

39 In the first year of the NLS, insufficient attention was given to the teaching of writing. For many schools, the most radical aspect of the NLS was the move away from teaching reading by "hearing readers" to the direct teaching of reading to the whole class or groups. About four out of five of the shared text sessions were shared reading rather than shared writing. This figure changed only a little in the autumn term of the second year, when fewer than one in four of the shared text sessions were shared writing. By the end of the year, however, teachers' planning showed that more attention was being paid to the teaching of writing and the majority of schools were aware of the importance of writing as a target for improvement.

40 Not only was there an imbalance between the teaching of reading and the teaching of writing, but the quality of the teaching of reading was better than that of writing in the autumn term. In just over half of the lessons where reading was taught, the quality of the teaching was good or very good. By contrast, where writing was taught, the quality of the teaching was good or very good in only four in ten lessons. There was also much more unsatisfactory teaching of writing than of reading; there were weaknesses in the teaching of writing in a quarter of the lessons where it was taught, compared to one in six lessons where reading was taught.

41 The quality of the teaching of writing changed little during the course of the year, although writing was taught more often and was given more time each week. There was a small increase in the proportion of lessons with good guided writing, but there was a slight decline in the quality of shared writing. The teaching of guided writing was weak in a quarter of lessons and shared writing was weak in one in five. The key weaknesses were unclear objectives; insufficient direct teaching, including modelling through shared writing; and insufficient attention paid to the processes of writing, including planning, drafting and editing.

42 Improvements were least marked in the teaching of word and sentence level work. Although there was more satisfactory teaching of these elements by the end of the second year in schools where the teaching had previously been weak, one-third of word and sentence level work was unsatisfactory or, indeed, absent altogether; a worrying proportion. For schools overall, the teaching of word or sentence level work was unsatisfactory in one out of four lessons.

43 In the summer term, HMI returned to the small number of classes where the teaching of the literacy hour in the autumn had been weak. There were improvements in all

aspects of the literacy hour in most of these classes, particularly in the teaching of guided writing.

44 The NLS was being implemented in every school in the sample visited by HMI, and the literacy hour was being taught in every class. As the year progressed and teachers gave the teaching of writing a higher priority, modifications to the way in which literacy was taught were seen in many schools. Teachers began to feel sufficiently confident to modify the literacy hour itself, and they began to provide additional time for the teaching of writing.

45 Two particularly effective modifications to the literacy hour were seen. First, when teaching writing, many teachers reversed the order in which they taught the first two elements of the hour. They taught the word level work first and the text level work second. This protected the important teaching of word level work, and enabled the teacher to draw a direct link between text level work and writing undertaken in the independent and group work. The second modification involved the provision, when appropriate, of extra time for independent and group work in order for pupils to undertake more extended pieces of writing.

46 There are potential dangers in modifications to the literacy hour. For example, a significant minority of schools did not include a clearly defined element of word or sentence level work in their modified literacy hours. Some teachers, while providing more time for the teaching of writing, emphasised the aspects with which they were more confident, such as the use of connectives, at the expense of the full range of writing objectives from the Framework.

47 The best teaching included all those features highlighted as important in the OFSTED *Framework for Inspection*. Four were particularly significant:

- *planning was good, especially weekly planning;*
- *learning objectives were clear and understood by the pupils, so there was a strong sense of purpose to the work;*
- *the pace of the lessons was good and controlled effectively by the teacher;*
- *expectations were high, both of the standards which should be achieved and the amount of work expected by the end of the lesson.*

48 Pupils' response to the literacy hour continues to be very positive. In nine in ten lessons their response was satisfactory or better, the same proportion as in the first year of implementation. In the one in ten lessons where pupils' response was unsatisfactory, this reflected weaknesses in the quality of the teaching, often because pupils were not engaged sufficiently in the work.

The teaching of writing

49 Most schools have achieved substantial improvements in standards of reading in recent years, and much credit for this improvement must go to the NLS and the high priority that teachers have given to the teaching of reading. However, improving standards of writing has proved to be much more of a challenge, both for the NLS and for teachers. Most schools are now spending more time on writing than they did in the early days of the Strategy, but too much of this time is spent on pupils practising writing rather than being taught how to improve it.

50 Two preoccupations appear to be limiting the quality of the teaching of writing, especially at Key Stage 2. The first is an over-reliance on duplicated worksheets. The result is that too many pupils are being asked to undertake low-level and undemanding writing tasks, requiring little or no sustained independent writing of any quality. The work often involves little more

than the completion of lists (of adjectives, for example) or the writing of dictionary definitions of vocabulary.

51 The second preoccupation is an over-reliance on the use of a good stimulus to inspire pupils to write. A good stimulus is important, but it needs to be backed up by the necessary teaching in the form of, for example, modelling the writing process or teaching and supporting pupils at the point of composition. At the same time, insufficient attention is given to sentence level work; teachers do not always give pupils the necessary technical skills and knowledge, such as an awareness of how suspense can be built or how to use the passive voice, to improve their writing.

52 Schools need to ensure:

- *an appropriate balance between the teaching of reading and the teaching of writing;*
- *at Key Stage 1, that the teaching of phonics is linked to the teaching of spelling as well as reading;*
- *that sufficient high quality word and sentence level work is included in the teaching of writing;*
- *that, within the total time given to writing, a high proportion of the teacher's time is used for the direct teaching of writing;*
- *that good-quality texts, including poetry and non-fiction, are used to illustrate the nature of the writing to be taught;*
- *that writing skills are taught and applied in subjects other than English;*
- *recognition of the need to teach at the point of composition rather than relying on marking and correction to address weaknesses.*

The teaching of shared text work

53 The quality of **shared reading** observed in the autumn term was good in three out of five lessons and satisfactory in six out of seven. The direct teaching of reading to the whole class, using a shared text such as a big book, has been one of the most effective and enjoyable elements of the NLS. The quality of shared reading has been enhanced by the availability of a greater range of big books, including poetry and non-fiction, and teachers are increasingly using texts which relate to other subjects, such as history or geography.

54 Some excellent shared reading sessions were seen, in which the objectives were clear and gave pupils the opportunity to apply their knowledge of word and sentence level work to their reading of the text. The following example illustrates this:

> In a shared reading session in a mixed Year 1/2 class, the teacher focused on the differences between spoken and written language. Pupils listened to a taped version of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and then considered the corresponding version in the big book. The teacher managed the discussion well, highlighting the importance of intonation and expression, and involving the pupils successfully. One of the key characteristics of the lesson was the opportunity the text gave for the pupils to apply their phonic knowledge to the text.

55 The quality of the teaching of **shared writing** in the spring and summer terms was good in just under half the lessons observed. It was weak in one in five. Oral composition by pupils was a powerful feature of some of the best writing lessons at both key stages. This was achieved in a variety of ways: through pupils' work in pairs; through the use of collaborative group work, and through focused questioning by the teacher which required pupils to compose aloud as part of a shared writing session. For example, the teacher of a mixed Reception and Year 1

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class used shared writing to establish pupils' understanding of writing conventions:

> The teacher set out clearly the intended audience for and purpose of the writing: a story for new pupils arriving from the nursery. In her questioning the teacher used appropriate terms such as character, sentence, spaces, word and full stop to develop pupils' own language. Her deliberate 'mistakes', such as writing 'b' not 'd', reinforced teaching points, provided opportunities to assess pupils' understanding and added to their enjoyment. Very good links were made between reading and writing: the shared text consolidated the reading and spelling of high-frequency words and reinforced the message that writing 'stays the same'. All pupils were highly motivated by the activity and showed excellent levels of concentration.

56 Another good example of shared writing was seen in a Year 6 top set, as part of their work on paragraphing:

> Using a photocopied passage from *Oliver Twist*, the teacher asked pupils to read and determine the main idea in each paragraph. His effective questioning generated good discussion about the nature of paragraphs and sentences. The second part of the whole class work followed on seamlessly from the opening, where pupils worked in pairs to discuss a second extract from *Oliver Twist* from which the paragraph boundaries had been removed. Pupils had to decide where each paragraph should begin and end and note the main idea of each paragraph. In the guided work, all pupils had to write five or more paragraphs as an alternative ending to a chapter, linked to the objectives for writing for that term, where the teacher had provided prompts from the novel. The success of this lesson derived from its effective structure with clear learning objectives; the very good use of an appropriate text; and the high level of interactive teaching and knowledgeable questioning.

57 The features of the best shared writing included:

- *careful adaptation of the structure of the literacy hour, especially in Years 5 and 6, to give more time to meet the teaching objectives for writing;*
- *incorporation of word and sentence level teaching into the broader teaching of writing, so that the teaching of grammatical skills and knowledge was an intrinsic part of the lesson;*
- *clarification of the audience and purpose for the writing at the beginning of the lesson and reference to these during the course of composition;*
- *making occasional deliberate errors to encourage pupils' alertness and deal with common mistakes or misconceptions;*
- *oral composition of individual sentences combined with frequent re-reading to check for accuracy and to maintain the flow of the whole text.*

The teaching of sentence and word level work

58 The quality of the teaching of word and sentence level work in the spring and summer terms was good in just under half the lessons observed. There were, however, weaknesses in the teaching of word and sentence level work in over a quarter of lessons. Where the quality of **sentence level teaching** was good, teachers were confident in their own knowledge of grammar. They were able to use their expertise to extend pupils' understanding of grammatical choices in writing. They were also confident enough to adjust the structure of the literacy hour to meet their objectives at both text level and sentence or word level. For example, in a Year 6 class, the inspector commented:

> The sentence level work was tackled appropriately before the shared writing. The teacher had prepared a five-paragraph narrative using a variety of connectives. Through discussion, pupils identified connectives, their functions in the sentences, the nature of complex sentences and the punctuation used to demarcate clauses. Complex grammatical material was handled accurately; the teaching was highly organised, knowledgeable and lively. In the shared writing which followed, the class composed with the teacher a paragraph establishing characters before they went on to write their own piece, including a paragraph containing a flashback. The guided writing group, with the teacher, produced a second paragraph on the setting; these paragraphs were considered by the group for improvement, and they adjusted the structure, the syntax and the vocabulary as necessary.

59 In another example of integrated text and sentence level work, a Year 3/4 class worked on constructing a persuasive argument from a text on school uniform, read by the teacher, with pupils joining in. HMI noted:

> The teacher analysed the text to identify the words and phrases which provided the structure. A writing frame was used to compose a text on the opposing point of view and, in pairs, pupils discussed their reasons. The teacher listed these on a whiteboard. This was a very effective session. It clarified for pupils the structure of the text and provided a source of ideas for the persuasive content of their own arguments which were written in the guided and independent work which followed. Clear objectives, broken down into achievable parts over three lessons, helped to focus the work effectively. Pupils were taught well about how to write persuasively and were given enough support and direction to succeed in doing it for themselves.

60 Not all teachers, however, have the necessary level of subject knowledge to identify the specific grammatical features which need to be taught if pupils are to improve their writing. Complex sentences cause particular difficulties for teachers, and yet the writing of complex sentences is an essential skill of a confident writer. The potential for teaching grammar, therefore, through shared text work, in either reading or writing, is often unrealised.

61 The NLS is clear that the teaching of word level work should give the highest priority to phonic knowledge and skills. However, the importance of word level work, especially the systematic teaching of phonics as a key component in learning to spell as well as learning to read, is not always reflected in the teaching at Key Stage 1. Even where relevant staff, such as teachers of Reception and Year 1 pupils, had attended LEA-led training on Progression in Phonics, the materials were frequently not being used in the lessons seen during the summer term.

62 Although the majority of lessons at Key Stage 1 included an element of word level work, weaknesses remained in one in four of the lessons where phonics was taught. The principal weakness was the teaching of word level work which depended too much on the shared text. In these lessons the phonics teaching was incidental, and insufficient attention was given to the daily, systematic teaching of phonics.

63 Where the teaching of word level work, and especially phonics, was good, teachers were invariably clear about their objectives, had secure subject knowledge and knew how to ensure that pupils grasped the relevant phonic knowledge and skills. For example:

> A literacy co-ordinator in a Year 2 class had recently attended training on *Progression in Phonics*. She used her

training very effectively, playing the game 'Full Circle' with the pupils to develop their skills in manipulating phonemes in words and, more specifically, to consolidate the 'i-e' spelling of the long vowel phoneme from the Year 1 objectives. She reinforced the notion of the split digraph in a word such as 'mice'. In the second part of the word level session, pupils were challenged in pairs to apply their phonic knowledge by discussing and spelling nonsense words. Good classroom management, for instance in the distribution of whiteboards for pupils to record their attempts, ensured that time was used efficiently and that the teaching proceeded at a brisk pace. The word level work was given sufficient attention in this lesson and the pupils made clear progress.

64 A second example is taken from the teaching of phonics in a Reception class:

> The teaching focused closely on the appropriate objectives from the Framework, with a clear emphasis on the development of pupils' phonic skills (hearing initial sounds) and knowledge (linking seven initial sounds to the letters which represented them). Pupils first matched letter cards into labelled envelopes pinned on a washing line to consolidate their recognition of letters. Next they played 'bingo' in which they had to cover the correct letter when the teacher said the sound. Finally, with small boards and marker pens, the pupils wrote the letters themselves. Both the bingo cards and the writing provided evidence for assessment, while the questions in the lessons were targeted to pupils as a result of previous assessment.

65 The key features of the best phonics teaching were:

- *the direct and systematic teaching of phonic skills as well as phonic knowledge;*
- *the brisk coverage and consolidation of initial letter sounds;*
- *an interactive approach to the teaching, ensuring a good level of pupil involvement;*
- *good use of pupils' responses to assess what they know and are able to do.*

The group and independent work

66 There has been little change in the quality of the group and independent work. If anything, this aspect of the teaching of the literacy hour is now slightly less successful than it was a year ago. The proportion of lessons where the independent group work was good has fallen slightly to just below one-half, while the proportion where it was unsatisfactory has remained the same at one lesson in six. The weaker lessons were spread fairly evenly across the year groups of both key stages and about half were in mixed-age classes. It is not easy to set pupils tasks at which they can work independently but at the same time be challenged sufficiently to make progress. Many teachers find it hard to manage this part of the lesson well and too often rely on low-level worksheets which occupy pupils but rarely promote progress or help to develop autonomy in reading or writing.

67 There are, however, many teachers – in almost one-half of lessons – who manage the independent and group work effectively. Two-thirds of the good lessons were in Key Stage 2, suggesting that it is much harder to manage the independent and group work effectively at Key Stage 1. Understandably, older pupils are better at working independently and are less reliant on the teacher. The features of the most

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successful independent and group work sessions include:

- *well-judged tasks providing challenge or consolidation and practice for pupils without requiring the direct intervention of the teacher;*
- *pupils who are able to help themselves with most of their questions: they can use dictionaries, word banks or lists and thesauruses, and discuss problems with other pupils before turning to the teacher;*
- *controlled differentiation of the tasks, so that as few different activities as possible are being undertaken;*
- *a general focus of all the work on the same teaching objectives;*

68 A high proportion of the most successful independent work took place when all the pupils were engaged in tasks relating to a common starting-point with similar objectives. The teachers had not attempted to provide several different activities but, instead, chose to link all the work to the shared reading or writing that had taken place earlier in the lesson. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson:

> The initial shared writing focused on how to write a report, based on data collected from a survey of local amenities that the pupils had done earlier. It reflected the focus on non-chronological reports linked to other subjects. The lesson objective focused on paragraphing and the grammatical features of a report. The teacher made good use of what the pupils had done so far to illustrate teaching points and clarify the objectives for the independent work. The class moved easily into this, working in groups of four. Two groups used computers for further drafting and editing. The teacher sat with each group in turn, giving direct teaching on sentence level work related to the pupils' writing. She was supported expertly by a teaching assistant who moved around the groups to assist pupils with editing and to ask questions to prompt ideas. A time limit was given when there were about ten minutes left; this gave a further boost to the already good pace of the work.
>
> In the plenary session the teacher was able to ensure that pupils understood the importance of editing their earlier drafts for conciseness and factual accuracy. One pupil read a draft and the subsequent edited version while the teacher commented incisively on connectives, the use of qualification for description and accuracy and how particular vocabulary contributed to conciseness. The plenary was relevant to all the pupils because they had all worked to the same objectives.

69 There are persuasive arguments in favour of independent work that is linked to the shared whole-class work done earlier in the lesson:

- *the ease of transitions and the speed with which the pupils can begin working with a good grasp of what is expected of them;*
- *the reduction in the time needed for the teacher to explain and organise the various tasks and the transfer of this time to more-direct teaching;*
- *the facility for the teacher to address the whole class while the work is in progress in order to make teaching points that are relevant and useful to everyone;*
- *the value of the common features of the work when the class is drawn together for the plenary session.*

Guided writing and reading

70 Good guided writing and reading in the literacy hour depend on well-organised independent and group work, allowing the teacher to work intensively and without interruption with one or two groups of

pupils. Although the focus of HMI inspection in the second year of the Strategy was the teaching of writing, guided reading was observed in a small number of classes, instances of good practice were seen. For example:

> In a Year 2 class, five groups of pupils were working on tasks related to the earlier shared reading of a playscript of *The Three Little Pigs*. The teacher worked with one group on guided reading, reinforcing the strategies of the shared reading session for dealing with unfamiliar words and for making sure that the text made sense. The pupils were required to explain how they wanted to communicate the voices of the different characters. Throughout the session the teacher wrote brief assessments which informed the choice of group tasks at other points during the week. This part of the literacy hour was organised effectively with high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour.

71 Guided writing was one of the aspects of the Strategy that was identified as a cause for concern in the report on the first year of implementation. Although the proportion of good teaching of guided writing rose by the summer term to almost one-half of the lessons, the amount of unsatisfactory teaching remained the same at one-quarter of lessons. Given the importance of improving attainment in writing, this is an important finding.

72 A significant feature of successful guided writing was the emphasis teachers placed on oral composition before the pupils recorded their ideas. They recognised the need to help pupils marshal their thoughts and articulate what they wanted to write before actually committing their ideas to paper. Sometimes personal whiteboards were used, enabling pupils to record their ideas and practise composition and allowing the teacher to check whether or not the pupils were on the right lines. For example, in a Year 4 class:

> The class had read *Bill's New Frock* and had discussed the problem faced by the main character. With her guided writing group, the teacher asked the pupils to draft sentences on their individual whiteboards about how the problem could be resolved. The results were shown to the teacher who checked them; by skilful questioning and prompting, she encouraged the pupils to improve the interest and accuracy of their sentences.

73 The key element of guided writing is that the teacher intervenes in order to steer and support pupils in improving their writing. This can be done in many ways: by the teacher modelling beforehand the skill or writing feature that is being taught, then providing support as the children practise it; by suggesting improvements to the spelling, punctuation or grammar of what is being written; or by encouraging pupils to evaluate, redraft and edit their own and others' writing. For example, in a Year 2 class:

> The pupils were writing factual sentences on the voyages of Christopher Columbus as part of some work on non-fiction texts. The teacher had modelled some of these sentences in the shared writing part of the lesson; for example, "King Ferdinand gave Christopher Columbus some money", and "The *Santa Maria* was the biggest boat". During the guided writing, the teacher checked that the pupils were writing in complete sentences and reminded them that proper nouns, such as Italy, need a capital letter even when they come in the middle of a sentence. The teacher's support and interventions were always constructive: she prompted the pupils to consider how to form each sentence

using a subject and verb, what vocabulary to use and to think constantly about punctuation and spelling.

74 A second example is taken from a Year 6 class:

> The class was learning how to write poetry using extended metaphors. The teacher worked with one group on improving the first draft. He encouraged the pupils to look closely at the force and impact of individual words and phrases they were writing, and at the layout of the poem. The teacher was able to guide the pupils into effective editing and redrafting of their own work. One boy eventually wrote:
>
> *'it drags predators*
> *into its murderous lair'*
>
> as part of an extended and effective metaphor of the sea.

75 The best examples of guided writing share common characteristics:

- *the teachers have good subject knowledge, understand the purpose of guided writing and how to teach it and know the requirements of the Framework well;*
- *the pupils are seated comfortably to write, and are not distracted by movement or noise from the rest of the class; the pupils and the teacher can all hear each other well;*
- *the teachers choose texts well to use as models for the pupils' writing;*
- *the writing tasks are often directly linked to a specific skill or genre that the teaching has focused on earlier in the lesson;*
- *connections are made between word and sentence level work and the process of composition;*
- *the teachers are occasionally prepared to extend a writing activity over several lessons and plan accordingly.*

The plenary

76 The plenary continues to be the weakest part of the literacy hour. The quality of the teaching of this element is good in only two in five lessons, and is weak in over one lesson in five. By contrast, the best plenaries made a significant contribution to pupils' learning and successfully pulled together the themes of the lesson.

77 Unsatisfactory plenaries are frequently little more than 'show and tell' sessions with groups or individuals invited to demonstrate to the rest of the class what they have done during the lesson. The attention levels of other pupils during such presentations are frequently poor. Other common weaknesses include content which is unconnected to the lesson itself or an inadequate allocation of time to ensure successful learning. In a minority of cases, the plenary does not occur, either as a matter of policy or because the teacher simply runs out of time. There is a danger that some teachers are abandoning the plenary because they find it a difficult part of the lesson to manage or because of the pressures on the time available to cover all the teaching objectives in the Framework.

78 In a Year 5 class the pupils were converting Wendy's story from *Peter Pan* into a playscript. The teacher had emphasised the features of play scripts, drawn attention to the importance of stage directions, and discussed the value of adverbs in stage directions as a way of helping actors to develop a character.

> The plenary made very effective use of time. Pupils shared ideas, with the focus on the influence of the stage directions on all areas of play production. They revised what they had done, with an emphasis on stage directions, creating the action, setting the scene and developing the speech. The teacher made very good use of pupils' contributions to extend their

understanding of the writing of stage directions and how the final result is achieved by attention to detail, e.g. the use of adverbs, pauses and silence as well as speech and action.

The inspector's final comment was, "The teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm make pupils reluctant to go for their lunch".

79 The features of the best plenaries were:

- *the reinforcement of the learning objectives of the lesson;*
- *feedback to pupils to show them what they had to do to improve;*
- *further teaching to clarify and extend the work of the lesson;*
- *good use of contributions from the pupils. For example, they might be invited to offer constructive evaluations of their own and others' work;*
- *the provision of homework, where appropriate, to extend what had been learned in the lesson.*

OTHER ISSUES

The teaching of handwriting

80 Teachers are recognising increasingly that handwriting is taught more effectively at times other than during the literacy hour. Handwriting takes place usually as a whole-class activity using short periods of time available such as immediately before or after lunch.

81 When handwriting is incorporated within the literacy hour, it is almost invariably one of the independent group activities provided for pupils, often as part of a weekly carousel of tasks. When handwriting was left as a low status group activity receiving little or no direct teaching, errors were rarely identified and corrected, and "copywriting" usually bore little resemblance to the style and quality of the handwriting pupils used at other times.

The effective teaching of writing to boys

82 The issue of the comparatively poor attainment of boys in writing has been widely recognised in recent years. Although there is also a gender gap in reading, it is much more marked in writing. In the other two core subjects, science and mathematics, boys and girls perform similarly; if anything, boys do better than girls in mental arithmetic. However, improving boys' attainment in writing is proving intractable for many schools.

83 A particularly good example of an approach to tackling this problem was noted in one school where the attainment of boys in English at Key Stage 2 was a cause for concern:

> The headteacher set up two teams, one focusing on boys' achievement and the other on raising overall achievement in the school. Monthly meetings were held with agreed agendas and minutes. The headteacher attended an LEA course on raising boys' achievement in literacy and led a series of staff workshops which looked at teaching strategies and the compilation of a list of resources to capture the interest of boys. Samples of boys' writing were scrutinised for any trends and patterns which might influence interest and motivation. Single-sex reading pairs of older and younger pupils were set up; a concerted effort was made to invite male members of families into school for reading sessions. All the approaches were co-ordinated and had a clear, agreed purpose. The headteacher was a forceful member of the project and ensured that staff were kept well informed. In the end of Key Stage 2 English tests undertaken in 2000, the attainment of boys had caught up with that of the girls.

84 From discussions with effective schools and with LEAs which have developed useful guidance on the issue, several features of good practice emerge:

- *the performance of boys and girls in all year groups is monitored regularly and systematically;*
- *teachers set clear targets for each unit of work, and make objectives for each lesson clear and attainable;*
- *there are resources which are of interest to boys, as well as girls;*
- *boys are encouraged to draw on their interests out of school as a source of material for writing;*
- *good use is made of ICT, practical activities and investigations;*
- *boys are encouraged to take risks, to "have a go", and (from an LEA advice document) "use competitive instincts constructively".*

The teaching of literacy to pupils for whom English is an additional language

85 The quality of the teaching of EAL learners is generally at least satisfactory. Over the past 12 months, most schools with such pupils have ensured that all pupils are fully included within the literacy hour. This has worked best where there has been a partnership in the teaching between EMAG staff and classroom teachers.

86 Some of the best teaching is a result of close collaboration between EMAG staff (both teachers and bi-lingual assistants) and mainstream teachers. For example, in a Year 5/6 literacy hour, the EMAG teacher made a particularly effective contribution throughout the lesson. During the shared reading, for instance, she sat with five EAL pupils, ensuring that they understood the technical vocabulary in an extract from a science fiction text and checking their responses before they volunteered answers within the whole class setting. Her focused contribution was the result of joint planning with the classteacher, the identification of precise learning targets for the EAL pupils and a determination by the school to make full use of the expertise of support staff. In some cases, there are practical difficulties in finding time for joint planning. Nevertheless, this ensures that specialist support is targeted effectively and takes full account of pupils' stages of English language learning.

87 The involvement of the headteacher continues to be particularly important, especially in the light of the changes to EMAG funding. In the best cases, headteachers ensure that test data about the attainment and progress of EAL learners is analysed carefully to ensure that deployment of support staff is targeted appropriately. Schools are making better use of data to monitor the progress of EAL learners. However, there are still too many examples where headteachers do not know the progress of individual groups of pupils, do not give sufficient status to EMAG staff and do not ensure their effective deployment.

88 The quality of support provided by LEAs for EAL provision is uneven. In most authorities, re-structured central services are still developing. The quality of the data provided for schools about the achievement of different ethnic groups is also uneven. However, closer relationships are beginning to develop within LEAs between literacy teams and EMAG services, prompted in part by the need to disseminate the national NLS materials on supporting EAL learners. This has been a positive development within the Strategy this year.

The teaching of literacy to pupils with special educational needs

89 In line with the inclusive philosophy of the NLS, very few special educational needs (SEN) pupils are withdrawn from the literacy hour. In those few examples where SEN pupils were withdrawn, this was usually a carefully-judged decision made in response to the particular or severe needs of an individual pupil or a small group. For example, in one school, three pupils with severe behavioural difficulties were withdrawn daily for the second half of the literacy hour and taught by a teaching assistant under appropriate guidance from the teacher. Where specific support was given to SEN pupils, this was in almost all cases satisfactory, but usually took place only in the third part of the literacy hour when the rest of the class was working independently.

90 Many schools are still finding it difficult to make the best use of support staff during the first half of the literacy hour when the teacher is teaching the whole class. There were too many examples where support staff played no constructive part in the first

30 minutes, other than in detecting misbehaviour.

91 The NLS has been taken on enthusiastically in the great majority of special schools with careful adaptations to meet the more-complex needs of particular groups of pupils. In many schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, the NLS has been used in its entirety. In general, teachers in special schools have made good use of the Framework as the basis for their planning, adjusting their teaching and the use of time according to the needs of the pupils. Shared reading using big books has been a strength in most special schools, but the teaching of writing and phonics needs to improve. A separate OFSTED report on the NLS in special schools has been published recently.[1]

The teaching of literacy in Reception classes

92 The guidance in the Framework for teaching is clear about the importance for Reception teachers of being able to choose to cover the elements of the literacy hour across the day, rather than in a single lesson. The guidance also recommends that the literacy hour is in place by the end of the Reception year. The great majority of teachers have accepted this advice and have made their decisions about when to teach the whole of the hour, with a keen awareness, based on careful assessment, of the needs of their pupils.

93 The quality of the teaching of literacy to Reception Year (YR) pupils compares favourably with that of all other year groups. There were initial concerns about whether YR pupils would cope with the whole of the literacy hour, but the majority of Reception teachers chose to implement the full hour as soon as practicable, usually by the end of the autumn term. Where there was a good variety of activities and the teaching was lively and interactive, even the youngest pupils took an active part in the work, and their concentration and enthusiasm were usually sustained well. One inspector observed: "The children are lively and keen to take part. They try hard to remember about taking turns to speak. Their contributions are relevant and they settle well to directed tasks. They are able to share resources and want to help each other."

94 YR pupils respond particularly well to the big books used for the initial shared text work with the whole class, although in mixed-age classes the choice of text was sometimes too difficult for the youngest pupils. A good example of a shared text being well used with YR pupils was seen with a linguistically-mixed class that included Russian, Albanian, Arabic, and Somali speakers, and several pupils who were difficult to manage:

> The teacher introduces a new big book, *Where's my teddy*? She leads a discussion about the title and author and finding the beginning of the story. She plays tricks on the children by pretending to start reading from the back page or from the bottom of the page up. The children volunteer to show her where to begin reading. The teacher sets the story in context and reads page by page, tracking the text with a pointer. This is a very good model of how to read with expression. The teacher draws pupils' attention to punctuation by asking, "What do we do when we come to a full stop?" The teaching engages the pupils' interest and creates a sense of enjoyment. The pupils make good progress. They understand terms about books and print, such as title, author and page, they recognise the function of full stops, and participate enthusiastically in talking about the events in the book.

95 The best teaching of Reception pupils generally took place in single-age classes, or in mixed-age classes in which the YR pupils were taught separately for at least

[1] *The Implementation of the National Literacy Strategy in Special Schools*. OFSTED, 2000.

part of the lesson. This was especially the case where there were three year groups in the same class. For example:

> In some sentence and word level work, Reception pupils were, appropriately, taught separately from the other year groups, especially where they had only recently entered school. In the whole-class sessions where Reception pupils were sitting alongside Y1, and occasionally Y2 pupils also, the successful teachers made skilful use of questioning and activities that required the physical as well as the mental involvement of all the pupils.

THE IMPACT OF INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Booster classes

96 For the second year running, schools were given additional funding to run booster classes, in which they were able to provide extra teaching for pupils on the borderline between Level 3 and Level 4. Headteachers almost always spoke positively of the booster class initiative in the second year, appreciating the greater flexibility they had to make the arrangements in ways that best suited their own circumstances. Typically, the additional teaching support was used either within literacy hours to target a group of pupils or to create an additional teaching set on certain days in the week. About one in six of the classes were run before or after school, or during lunchtime. The size and frequency of booster classes varied: in one school five teachers taught groups of 14 pupils once a week after school; in another, the class teacher focused on six pupils for two morning sessions each week.

97 The quality of teaching in booster classes was at least satisfactory. Where it was most effective the teaching was based on a careful assessment of pupils' needs in English, such as how to improve planning for discursive writing or how to present a balanced argument. Almost all schools felt that there had been clear benefits for pupils who were on the borderline between Levels 3 and 4. Pupils were enthusiastic about the work and responded well to the sessions. Evidence from Section 10 inspections is generally positive and reports good support from parents for booster classes.

Additional Literacy Support

98 The Additional Literacy Support (ALS) initiative was introduced in 1999 to provide additional help for lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4. The scale of the initiative has been considerable, and has included the training of over 14,000 teachers and 15,000 teaching assistants. It provided training for teaching assistants and a "catch up" programme which concentrated on key aspects of reading, writing and phonics. The training used centrally prepared materials and was provided by LEAs, using their literacy consultants and English or primary advisers. The training was received positively by teachers and, particularly, by support staff. A number of schools provided additional school-based training for other support staff, based on the ALS teaching materials.

99 The materials in the "catch up" programme proved to be straightforward to use and were enjoyed by the pupils. Many schools also made use of the material with other year groups, particularly Year 5, although they reported that it was suited best to the Year 3 and 4 pupils for whom it was originally intended. The ALS programme has helped to improve pupils' reading, but there is little evidence so far of its impact on writing.

100 Teaching assistants initially found it challenging to manage the brisk pace of the lessons and pupils' responses. However, they developed their confidence and skills rapidly and generally provided effective teaching support. Their effectiveness invariably derived from their careful planning and preparation and their close focus on the objectives of the programme. Eight out of ten sessions led by teaching assistants were at least satisfactory and over half were good. In most of the sessions observed, pupils made at least satisfactory progress; often it was good.

101 After a particularly effective ALS session led by a trained teaching assistant, HMI noted:

Aim of lesson: to explore the spellings of the long vowel phoneme 'i'. The teaching assistant skilfully asked questions about the different representation of this common phoneme. Pupils were required to underline the words in a text that included this sound. The teaching assistant then gave clear instructions about how to play the 'phoneme spotter' game (segmenting exercise). Pupils were encouraged to volunteer suggestions and demonstrate their answers on a magnetic whiteboard. Resources for the session were well prepared and the teaching assistant had a very good relationship with the pupils. She used both open and closed questions very effectively. The session had a brisk pace and all the pupils made good progress.

The use of information and communication technology

102 The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support the teaching of literacy remains limited. Schools with ICT suites rarely used them during literacy hours. In the few examples where good practice in the use of an ICT suite for teaching literacy was seen, this was invariably a reflection of the skills and confidence of individual teachers and of improvements in the range and quality of resources available. Many schools recognise the use of ICT in literacy as an area for development; few are clear how to proceed in the most effective way. Two factors above all facilitate the effective use of ICT in the teaching of literacy: first, access to ICT expertise, and secondly, a careful match of the software to the teaching objectives of the Framework.

103 Classroom-based computers were used during the group and independent work in about one in eight lessons observed by HMI, although rarely were more than one or two pupils involved in the ICT work. Nevertheless, good examples were seen at both key stages. For example, Year 1 pupils used appropriate computer word games to help them recognise and use initial and final consonant clusters in words. Year 2 pupils used portable computers in a guided writing session to draft and edit simple sentences, adding commas and adjectives and checking for sense. At Key Stage 2, Year 3 and 4 pupils drafted notes in a prescribed style for story writing. In lessons where computers were used inappropriately, pupils' lack of word processing skills was often the main reason for limited progress: often they would have done better using pencil and paper with the rest of the class.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The influence of the headteacher

104 The evaluation of the first year of the Strategy found that "The contribution of the headteacher was one of the most significant factors affecting implementation". The continuation of clear, well-informed leadership has enabled effective schools to maintain the momentum of the NLS.

105 Leadership and management by headteachers improved during the second year. At the end of the first year, leadership and management were satisfactory or better in eight in ten schools; by the end of the second year, they were satisfactory or better in almost nine in ten and good in almost half the schools. Over the year there was a significant increase in the amount of monitoring by headteachers of the teaching of literacy. Weaknesses were often a result of issues beyond the control of schools, such as vacancies in management positions, high staff turnover or the absence of key personnel.

106 Headteachers, with their LEAs, have been required to set numerical targets for pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, and many have also set targets at Key Stage 1. Many are still reluctant, however, to recognise the potential of the Strategy to raise pupils' attainment and, as a result, numerical targets are too frequently unambitious. They rely too heavily on the previous attainment of pupils, rather than setting goals to which the school should aspire.

107 Many headteachers are uncertain about the role and nature of curricular targets, although most schools are now able to identify the areas of literacy which need particular attention. Many teachers have attempted to provide individual curricular targets for each pupil, but the workload involved is considerable and for many schools this has proved unworkable. Clustering targets for a group of pupils with similar levels of attainment is proving a more successful approach. In one school HMI noted:

> Curricular targets have been set at both key stages based on information gathered from the literacy audit, the analysis of test results, NFER data, as well as from the monitoring of pupils' work.
>
> Key Stage 1: to develop phonemic awareness, segmenting words in order to spell more confidently and accurately; to construct sentences using appropriate punctuation; to be able to develop these into sustained writing which takes account of audience and purpose.
>
> Key Stage 2: to develop the ability to draft, to self-check, to refine and expand the initial draft in order to produce an improved final draft; to develop the ability to manipulate written language; to select and use appropriate vocabulary to enhance what is written.
>
> Implementation strategies have been identified (including staff training) as well as success criteria. The school's next step is to break down the key stage targets into specific ones for year groups and groups of pupils, linked to the objectives set out in the Framework.

108 Effective headteachers have done more than just ensure that the mechanics of the Strategy have been established successfully. They have:

- *monitored the teaching of literacy regularly, giving detailed oral and written feedback and helping teachers to review their strengths and weaknesses,*

- *scrutinised planning to ensure medium- and short-term plans match the Framework, are appropriately balanced and match pupils' needs;*
- *responded selectively to national priorities by organising additional support and training for the teaching of aspects of literacy such as writing, spelling and phonics;*
- *scrutinised pupils' work through regular sampling to assess standards of attainment and measure progress, particularly in writing;*
- *set challenging numerical targets for groups of pupils, after carefully analysing data;*
- *helped teachers to identify curricular targets based on an analysis of assessment information.*

The influence of the literacy co-ordinator

109 The work of the literacy co-ordinator continues to have a significant impact. In almost nine in ten schools it is satisfactory or better; in half it is good. An important influence on the effectiveness of literacy co-ordinators is the support and status given to them by headteachers; to be effective they need non-contact time, resources, and regular time at staff meetings and training sessions to keep colleagues up to date with literacy developments.

110 The most effective co-ordinators share common characteristics. They :

- *are very good teachers with strong subject knowledge, able to act as effective role models for their colleagues;*
- *are influential in leading training and are able to communicate effectively, providing good support and advice;*
- *are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, usually through direct observation in the classrooms;*
- *involve themselves in the scrutiny of pupils' work, organising work sampling sessions, guiding teachers in the assessment and moderation of pupils' writing and, in some cases, working closely with headteachers in analysing attainment data and setting numerical and curricular targets.*

The impact of the NLS on the rest of the curriculum

111 The first report on the NLS commented that the majority of headteachers said the curriculum had been "squeezed" in order to accommodate the NLS. This remains the case, but schools are aware of the consequences and are generally careful to ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced while giving high priority to literacy and numeracy. Increasingly, this has included time for literacy beyond the literacy hour itself, especially for "extended" or "sustained" writing at Key Stage 2, extra lessons for handwriting and, to a lesser extent, for personal reading.

112 Even though most schools have looked at the amount of time allocated to subjects, there are still many where the timetable, especially for the morning, has not been adjusted to match the requirement for a literacy hour and a daily mathematics lesson of between 45 and 60 minutes. A consequence of this is that the literacy and numeracy lessons often drift beyond the recommended times, or time is wasted on low-level activities. Nevertheless, there are signs that schools are tackling this, for example, by including work in music or physical education during the morning, as well as the literacy and numeracy lessons.

113 A common response to the need to keep a balance and maintain time for all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education has been the blocking of subjects into units to be taught in alternate half terms: history and geography, or art and design and technology. This enables schools to provide sustained and focused

subject teaching over a period of time. Nevertheless, many headteachers reported that some subjects are receiving less time than in the past, with physical education (especially swimming), art and design and technology affected the most.

114 Other subjects are showing clear benefits from the Strategy. When subjects such as history and geography are taught with the NLS objectives in mind, the teaching becomes focused effectively on essential skills: for example, using non-fiction texts or writing in a particular genre such as an account in history or an explanation in geography. Lessons in other subjects now have a better shape, beginning with direct teaching, followed by a period when pupils work in groups or individually, with the main points of the lesson re-visited in a closing plenary. Teachers are also capitalising on the possibilities offered by subject-based texts as source material for literacy hours, particularly as more big books relating to history, geography, science and religious education become available. There are danger signs, however: some schools are responding to the pressures on curriculum time by conflating several subjects into topics with a consequent lack of focus on the distinctiveness of individual subjects and their key objectives.

The reinforcement and development of writing skills throughout the curriculum

115 HMI visited a sample of lessons in subjects other than English in which writing was to take place. In the majority of these lessons, the teaching of writing was good and enhanced the quality of the work in these subjects. When the teaching of literacy is combined with the teaching of other subjects, progress is made in both subjects. The essential element is the establishment of a link between the two subjects. The positive influence of the NLS was seen in several aspects of the work in other subjects, for example:

- *the use of a shared text; "Goodnight Mr.Tom" was used to introduce a history lesson about the Second World War. Close scrutiny of the text allowed the teacher to help pupils understand the meaning of the essential historical vocabulary, such as "rationing" and "evacuation". Another example was seen in a science lesson, where a large text included illustrations of plants with their parts labelled. Pupils discussed the different types of captions and their function, one type simply giving names, another describing processes such as the life cycle of the dandelion;*

- *the use of writing frames to guide written work; for example, in the history lesson using "Goodnight Mr.Tom", the teacher provided a writing frame which set out the basic structure of a letter home from an evacuee;*

- *reference to the need to use different genres of writing according to the subject. For example, the writing of a report on a science experiment was taught systematically. The teacher stressed the need to set out aims, materials, methods, predictions and results; reminded pupils of the key features of style and form, for example, the use of the past tense and formal register, colons, temporal connectives, chronological order and bullet points, and tables, diagrams and graphs;*

- *clarity of objectives, shared with the pupils and referred to during and at the end of lessons. For example, on the board at the start of a geography lesson the teacher had written, "Write a letter linked to the geographic theme of 'floods'. Select the style and tone appropriate to the intended reader";*

- *the use of the technical language of literacy, such as adjective and adverb, and repeated encouragement and guidance to promote high quality, complex sentences, including (in one example) the exhortation to be "adventurous and surprising";*

- *the use of elements of the structure of the literacy hour, such as direct whole-class teaching to start the lesson off, and a plenary at the end of the lesson;*

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the science lesson referred to above ended with a "What am I?" game in which pupils described a part of a plant and its function and the rest of the class had to guess which part it was.

116 Where there were weaknesses in the teaching of writing within other subjects, these stemmed from missed opportunities to link it with the literacy skills which were required. For example, some teachers did not teach the specific skills related to the reading and writing of non-fiction texts in history and geography. They did not make clear to the pupils what the objectives for the lesson or sequence of lessons were and how the reading and writing to be done were essential for the subject.

Resources

117 In the first year of the Strategy almost all schools made the purchase of resources for literacy a high priority. They spent heavily on books and other material to support the literacy hour, using funding from a variety of sources, including local fundraising. Headteachers and literacy co-ordinators have tried hard to ensure that resources have kept pace with the demands of the teaching, buying big books, sets of texts for guided reading, phonic schemes and equipment such as overhead projectors and whiteboards.

118 Consequently, there have been far fewer concerns this year about shortages of literacy resources. At both key stages, the use and quality of resources are generally good, and the range of high quality material has grown rapidly, including non-fiction, poetry and playscripts. The availability and use of published schemes for literacy have grown substantially over the year, often as an understandable response to the desire to reduce the time teachers spend preparing teaching materials. There are dangers in this: the proliferation in the use of worksheets too often results in low-level work, while over-reliance on a scheme often reduces the amount of interactive teaching, which results in pupils spending too much time working in isolation.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Training courses

119 Centrally organised and school-based training gathered pace in the second year of the NLS. All LEAs identified a new cohort of schools for additional 'intensive' support and key teachers were invited to attend five-day training based on the model from the first year of implementation. The NLS management team estimates that approximately 3,550 schools received intensive support during 1999/2000. A range of additional courses was organised by LEAs. Much of this training focused on the teaching of writing, phonics and spelling. The materials used for this training were prepared and published swiftly by the Strategy, often in response to weaknesses identified during the first year. The main courses held through the year were concerned with Progression in Phonics (PiPs), the Spelling Bank, ALS.

120 The consultants in all LEAs attended regional training, led by regional directors, to familiarise themselves with the PiPs materials in order to disseminate the training in their own LEAs. The timing of the PiPs training varied from LEA to LEA; in most cases training sessions were held in the autumn and spring terms. Some LEAs, however, did not run the training until late in the summer term; this delayed schools' use of the materials. Schools not among those receiving additional support from consultants were particularly affected, and some LEAs are delaying the introduction of the PiPs materials until autumn 2000. These delays are having an adverse effect on the teaching of phonics at Key Stage 1, particularly where the speed of coverage is concerned. Nevertheless, in the majority of the schools where staff had attended training, it had been well received, and the materials were appreciated by the Key Stage 1 teachers.

121 Training in the use of the Spelling Bank was aimed at KS2 teachers. As a result of the training, some schools have introduced spelling workshops. One middle school, for example, replaced the reading workshops for Key Stage 2 with spelling workshops at the end of each day. ALS training was undertaken in the majority of schools and the programme is being widely used. A small number of schools have not been able to attend ALS training or have not had additional funding from the LEA to set up the programme.

122 Centrally organised day and twilight training was of good quality in the majority of cases. The consultants leading the training were well prepared and effective in communicating the key messages. Courses included the teaching of narrative writing in Y5/6, the teaching of grammar and poetry, and providing for pupils with SEN.

123 In the main, schools were able to release the appropriate members of staff to attend the training. Where practicable, schools released as many as five teachers to attend the training on writing. However, many headteachers reported problems in securing supply teachers. More often than not, English co-ordinators attended the training and were expected to disseminate the information on returning to school. However, in the small minority of schools where the leadership and management of literacy were ineffective, key messages were often not disseminated and valuable training opportunities were lost.

124 A major focus of the school-based training was the teaching of writing, including phonics, spelling and handwriting, which reflected the national priorities. Many schools had analysed their 1999 national

test results, and were able to identify areas of weakness. Where school staff also undertook moderation exercises, using samples of pupils' writing, the teachers benefited from an increased awareness of National Curriculum levels and of the teaching which would be required to enable pupils to make further progress.

The influence of the LEA literacy consultants

125 Where schools have had direct contact and support from LEA consultants, the response has been very positive. Schools have described the work of consultants as "excellent", "realistic" and "practical". Their confidence and professional expertise have grown significantly in response to the wide range of demands placed upon them. For example, all consultants received high quality training in grammar to prepare them for leading training in writing.

126 In their work with schools, consultants provide guidance on the literacy audit and action planning, demonstrate lessons, model guided reading and writing, monitor planning and give feedback, lead staff meetings, support the work of the literacy co-ordinators and provide advice on resources.

127 Schools which do not receive intensive support for literacy nevertheless benefit from consultants' advice. Regular meetings for literacy co-ordinators, led by consultants, are useful and play a major part in supporting their work.

128 In several LEAs where the literacy team has advisory teachers for literacy in addition to consultants, the work of the advisory teachers successfully complements the work of the consultants. For example, some advisory literacy teachers have demonstrated guided writing and are having a positive influence on teachers' practice.

129 The overwhelming impression gained by inspectors from observing the work of consultants at first-hand is of a group of people working hard and effectively, and bringing to their work not just strong professional and technical skills, but excellent interpersonal qualities such as tact, humour, persistence and an astute judgement of what is possible. Most concerns about the work of consultants have related to the way in which they have been managed by the LEA. Three key issues have emerged about the work of consultants:

- *a few consultants are reluctant to challenge weak practice directly, and fail to make their concerns clear after observing a poorly taught literacy hour;*
- *where the purpose of the visit is not clearly agreed with the school in advance, the work of the consultant is less effective;*
- *communication is not always clear between consultants and LEA advisers. This is especially important in order to ensure that consultants are deployed effectively, and that they receive sufficient support in difficult situations.*

The influence of other LEA personnel

130 Support from LEAs in the implementation and development of the NLS is uneven. There are significant concerns about the management of the NLS in about one in ten LEAs. In the best examples, the LEA literacy team is highly valued by schools, the English adviser monitors teaching in a sample of schools and supports the consultants by meeting them regularly, establishing shared priorities and leading some of the training. Many LEA literacy centres provide valuable loan facilities, and useful advice, written guidance and regular bulletins.

131 A picture emerged of the features of the leadership and management of the NLS in the most effective LEAs, features which

have also been identified as important in the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS):

- *the chief education officer and the senior management team provided strong support and effective strategic management;*
- *the LEA established a positive climate for implementation, communicated this to schools, and gave clear messages about key national and local priorities;*
- *the LEA's agenda for school improvement, expressed in the Education Development Plan, included a high priority for literacy and numeracy;*
- *management structures in the LEA had clear lines of responsibility and accountability, and ensured that literacy and numeracy strategy managers were provided with adequate time and resources;*
- *the LEA established a robust target-setting process, based on test results and the LEA's own monitoring, involving schools and setting challenging targets;*
- *good use was made of assessment and inspection data as a basis for action and intervention.*

132 As with the management of the NNS, a number of LEAs should consider:

- *how line managers manage their consultants in a way that makes the best use of their time, and sets priorities for them in a way that protects them from excessive demands;*
- *the planning and provision of induction training for newly appointed consultants;*
- *improving the liaison between the literacy and numeracy teams and the LEA advisory and inspection teams. Consultants need to be kept informed about issues in the schools with which they are involved and the information held centrally by LEAs used to identify priorities for the work of consultants;*
- *holding regular meetings between the line managers and their consultants to discuss issues and review progress against clearly stated objectives.*

133 The support and monitoring which LEA link advisers and inspectors provide are not always effective. Most LEAs now have a regular monitoring schedule that includes a clear agenda for routine visits. In addition, the most effective LEAs concentrate their resources on schools where standards are too low. However, in about one in ten LEAs, schools in difficulty are not getting the level of support and intervention that is needed, and issues of poor teaching are not being tackled.

The role and impact of the regional directors

134 The management of the NLS at the national level has provided strong leadership and a determined commitment to ensuring the national implementation of the Strategy. Above all, there has been a sustained debate, at times heated and controversial, about the most effective ways of teaching pupils to read and write. The regional directors have also been effective: they are responsible for the national co-ordination of the work of the LEA literacy consultants and for providing them with training and regular briefing on the progress of the Strategy. This has been largely successful and has enabled the central messages of the national Strategy to be disseminated accurately at a local level.

135 The regional directors have also been important contact points in their regions for other agencies, such as those responsible for assessing Education Development Plans in LEAs. They have worked closely with LEAs in the promotion of the Strategy, advising and supporting senior LEA staff and advisers; this has been especially valuable in those LEAs where there have been weaknesses in the management of the NLS. In the second year, three additional regional directors were appointed. Their role is to liaise between the national Strategy and all providers of initial teacher training.

CONCLUSION

136 At present, far too many pupils leave their primary schools ill-equipped for the writing demands of the secondary curriculum. The problem is not new. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools Annual Report for 1997/98 commented, "The performance of boys in English, particularly in writing, will need to improve substantially if government targets are to be achieved by the year 2002". This improvement has not yet taken place and the problem has proved to be more intractable than expected. Nevertheless, there are encouraging signs in the Level 2B and above results in writing at Key Stage 1 and in the NFER tests in Years 3, 4 and 5, that improvements are working their way through. Clear objectives for the teaching of writing have been part of the Framework for teaching from the start and writing was included in the training for literacy. This has not been enough, however, to secure the scale of change needed to raise standards of writing sufficiently. Extra training and materials are now being provided with this goal in mind. This report raises issues that the new training needs to tackle if the quality of the teaching of writing and pupils' attainment are to improve.

137 Although the majority of schools are giving more emphasis to the teaching of writing, the quality of the teaching remains a concern. Some of the increased emphasis takes the form simply of more writing rather than better writing. Linked to this, too little importance is attached to teaching sentence level work at this early stage. The result is that too many pupils fail to grasp the building blocks of effective written communication, including the English spelling system and the understanding of a sentence. Unless the word and sentence level elements of the Framework are established securely by the end of Key Stage 1, too many pupils will continue to move into Key Stage 2 with insecure foundations for more demanding reading and writing. Above all, what is required are clear and concerted approaches to writing across the whole curriculum, where what pupils write is shared and valued. More pupils than at present should feel a sense of pride in what they have written and see it as a source of pleasure and a means of communication.

138 The national target for English in 2002 has focused attention on the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, but there are also important issues to be tackled at Key Stage 1. The high percentages of pupils who attain Level 2 in reading and writing in the end of Key Stage 1 tests disguise the worryingly large proportions of pupils who, having reached Level 2C, have not grasped the basics of literacy sufficiently well to ensure sustained progress. The teaching of phonics, as a tool for efficient spelling as well as reading, has a key part to play in this; a high profile was given to the teaching of phonics in the early stages of the Strategy and it will be important to maintain that momentum through the use of the Progression in Phonics guidance or similar phonics schemes.

139 Much debate is taking place about the degree to which modifications should be made to the literacy hour. Where teachers are already teaching successfully the objectives in the NLS Framework, they can make informed choices about how to teach literacy in the light of their own circumstances and the priorities for their pupils. By contrast, where the rationale and methodology of the Framework have not been understood fully, there is often a desire to return to previous practice. Adaptations in the first case are to be

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encouraged and supported. In the second they are not. In this lies a challenge for those managing the Strategy nationally: encouraging schools to modify the literacy hour so that they can feel a greater sense of ownership carries the risk that some teachers will revert to methods that failed to work in the past. The preconditions for modification must be proven success in reading and writing for boys as well as girls and a clear acknowledgement of the paramount importance of the objectives in the Framework for teaching.

140 The National Literacy Strategy has brought about a transformation in the way in which reading and, to a lesser extent, writing are taught and, through the Framework for teaching, has provided a common starting-point and a common language for everyone who is involved in the teaching of literacy. The Strategy has introduced teachers to new methods and materials and has required many teachers to improve substantially their own subject knowledge. All this has added up to a range of complex pedagogical and organisational changes to be implemented by teachers. This report, at the end of the second year of the Strategy, describes which of these are working well and which are not. The report is also clear about the considerable amount of work that still needs to be done before the Strategy can be regarded as wholly successful in transforming the teaching of all aspects of literacy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE TECHNICAL REPORT: Literacy

141 The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to organise a yearly testing programme to support and inform the OFSTED evaluation of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS). Testing within the sample schools first took place in 1999 following the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) in autumn 1998. This provided a baseline set of data. By summer 2000, two sets of test data could be compared to examine any changes in attainment over time.

142 All sample schools were invited to take part in the testing for a minimum of three years. A series of tests for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 were developed by QCA solely for use in the evaluation. The format, content and outcomes of these tests were similar to those of the published QCA optional tests. Separate elements tested reading, writing and spelling. For reading and spelling, age-standardised scores could be calculated and for each of the three elements pupils were awarded a national curriculum level.

143 Participating schools were asked to administer the tests to their pupils in the summer term of each year. Completed scripts were returned to NFER for marking. Background information about the pupils was also collected in order to inform the analysis of test results. In 1999, 283 schools agreed to take part in the testing programme and 282 took part in summer 2000. The size of the pupil sample was substantial (around 10,500 in each year group) and in Years 4 and 5, around 9,000 pupils had test scores available from two rounds of testing. Detailed feedback was provided to each school showing results for their pupils compared to results for the national sample as a whole. The match between the composition of the achieved sample and that of the school population as a whole was generally good. However, there was slight under-representation of schools within the lowest quintile in terms of Key Stage 2 results and so weighting was applied to test results at school level prior to analysis to address this.

144 In summer 2000 a range of analyses were undertaken. The performance of whole year groups in both 1999 and 2000 was compared to monitor changes in average test results for different populations over time (as with year-on-year comparison of national Key Stage 2 results). All three year groups in 2000 achieved slightly higher age-standardised scores in reading and spelling than the same year groups in 1999. There was also evidence of some upwards shift in the distribution of national curriculum levels in all test elements. In Year 5, for example, 46 per cent of children reached Level 4 in reading representing an increase of three per cent over the numbers at the same level in 1999. In Year 5 writing, six per cent more children achieved Level 3 or better in 2000 compared to 1999, bringing the total at this level to 65 per cent.

145 Multilevel models were created to test the significance of these observations and also to examine the variation in scores at both pupil and school level. The use of these complex statistical models confirmed that, for those year groups where scores were available from two rounds of testing (Year 4 and Year 5 in 2000), the scores from the second round of testing were significantly higher than in the first round. For reading and spelling, where scores are adjusted for age before inclusion in the model, this improvement is over and above that which would be expected due to maturation of the pupils.

146 At individual pupil level a number of background factors were found to be associated with higher scores or with greater progress between the two rounds of testing. The most significant factor affecting scores in all three year groups was prior attainment at Key Stage 1: children who achieve higher levels are more likely to have higher scores in subsequent years. The use of multilevel models allows the effect of each factor to be estimated independently of all other factors. When the relationship between gender and test score was examined, girls achieved better results than boys in reading and writing in all year groups. So, for any group of pupils with similar levels of prior attainment at Key Stage 1, the girls are likely to have higher scores from the reading and writing elements of the evaluation tests throughout Key Stage 2.

147 Pupils eligible for free school meals and those with identified special educational needs (SEN) generally had lower scores than other pupils even when allowance had been made for their Key Stage 1 levels. Higher scores were also associated with fluency in the use of English as an additional language and with some ethnic groups in particular test elements. For example, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils tended to have higher scores in spelling and writing than pupils categorised as 'white', once all other factors were taken into account.

148 In terms of progress from 1999 to 2000, girls and boys were equally likely to have improved their writing scores. Boys and girls made comparable progress in spelling between Year 3 and Year 4 but girls made more progress than boys in reading. Between Year 4 and Year 5, boys and girls progressed to the same extent in reading but girls made more progress in spelling. Pupils eligible for free school meals and at the higher stages of the SEN Code of Practice made comparable progress to other pupils in reading and spelling but did less well in writing.

149 The relationship between school level factors and pupils' scores and progress was examined. In summer 2000, school level information available included measures derived from Her Majesty's Inspectors' (HMI) visits to participating schools in terms of ratings for various aspects of school management and the implementation of the NLS. In Years 4 and 5 pupils in schools with less turnover in their pupil population had higher scores as did pupils in schools with higher OFSTED ratings of headteacher effectiveness. Pupils in all three years in schools known by OFSTED to be receiving 'intensive support' under the NLS had lower scores than comparable pupils in other schools. In reading only, pupils in metropolitan areas tended to have lower scores, but Year 4 pupils in such schools showed more improvement in their reading scores between 1999 and 2000 than their counterparts in non-metropolitan areas.

150 Another aspect of the analysis was to map the progress of individual pupils on different tests at different times in terms of national curriculum levels. In 2000, mapping could be undertaken from Key Stage 1 (Year 2) to Year 3, Year 3 to Year 4, Year 4 to Year 5, and for a sub-set of the sample, from Year 5 1999 to Key Stage 2 (Year 6) 2000. The mapping exercise has produced a wealth of data about how children tend to progress through the national curriculum levels. However, there are differences in the nature of some of the test groups used which make exact comparisons difficult. For example, at Key Stage 2 'writing' includes spelling, but spelling is measured separately at Key Stage 1 and on the evaluation tests. It is also important to note that when subdividing the sample of pupils in each year group into those obtaining particular sub-levels in one test, these 'sub-samples'

can become very small so that they are not a reliable basis for statistical prediction.

151 Allowing for the limitations of the mapping exercise across tests, useful observation can be made. It is clear that progress in writing levels throughout Key Stage 2 is much slower than in reading. Progress appears to accelerate during the final year of Key Stage 2 in both reading and writing with almost 90 per cent of pupils achieving Level 3 in reading in Year 5 going on to achieve Level 4 or better in the end of Key Stage 2 tests. In writing the corresponding proportion was 75 per cent of Level 3 pupils moving on to Level 4 or better.

152 The analysis of these test results alone cannot directly determine the extent of the impact of the NLS. No comparable data was available before the introduction of the Strategy, and since this is a national initiative there is no scope for comparison to a matched 'control group' of pupils without experience of the Strategy. However, the analysis has shown sound evidence of improvement in scores in the sample schools from 1999 to 2000 during the second year of the NLS.

153 The full technical report of which this is a summary is available from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority http://www.qca.org.uk

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